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Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey**

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**THROSSEL HOLE BUDDHIST ABBEY** is a training monastery and retreat centre following the Serene Reflection Meditation Tradition (Sōtō Zen). It is a member church of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives. The monks of Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey are members of the Order and follow the teaching and example of the late Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett.

**FOUNDER:** Rev. Master P.T.N.H. Jiyu-Kennett, M.O.B.C.

**TRUSTEES:**  
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**ABBOT:** Rev. Daishin Morgan, M.O.B.C.

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**PLEASE NOTE.** We would like to clarify our use of the word 'He' when referring to the 'Eternal,' the 'Cosmic Buddha,' the 'Dharmakaya,' 'Avalokiteshwara Bodhisattva' etc. Whenever 'He' is used, understand that what is meant is 'He/She/It.' We simplify our usage in this way so that the continuity of the articles is not repeatedly broken up by the form 'He/She/It,' and also because we have not yet found another word which conveys the complete meaning.

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## Eternal Meditation

Rev. Daishin Morgan, M.O.B.C.

When someone dies, it is often said of them in Buddhism, that they have entered eternal meditation. I was particularly struck by this when sitting with Rev. Master Jiyu, before and during her funeral, and many times since. There is a real sense of depth and light that leaves adjectives a bit meaningless. It is the same as what you find when you look within and let go of the self. Eternal meditation is not something that one enters at death, nor does one leave it at birth. It is that which does not come or go. When one gets caught up in the world of illusions the coming and going is mistaken for the real. We live in a world of illusions, we have an illusory body and experience illusory feelings. In saying they are illusory, I don't mean that they don't exist but that they have no abiding substance in the sense that they come and go while eternal meditation never ceases. When strong feelings arise, I try to recognise that they are impermanent and are shortly replaced by other feelings. We must recognise these constantly moving patterns of feelings, for if we try to pretend they are not there we get into all sorts of trouble. At the same time, if we make them real by identifying with them, thinking that I am my feeling of the moment, then we miss the presence of eternal meditation. So if we let the shifting patterns of feelings come and go and do not worry about them, then they take their natural place in the scheme of things while That which does not move remains.

It is a powerful lesson to discover that, even in the presence of strong emotions, eternal meditation still remains. Once seen, this is applicable anywhere, whatever feelings and emotions come our way in the course of life and whatever events happen in the so-called external world. They will come, be there for a time and then they will go, and there is That which is not born and does not die.



## A Special Invitation to Members and Friends of Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey



You and your families are warmly invited to join with the Rev. Master Daishin Morgan and the monastic Community in commemorating the first anniversary of the death of our Founder, Great Master Hōun Jiyu. On Thursday, November 6th, 1997 we will celebrate a special Memorial Ceremony, to be followed by a Dharma talk for all attending. Afterwards, you are invited to gather with us for a celebratory 'bring and share' meal of festive vegetarian fare.

This advance notice is being published to allow as many of you as possible to plan your calendars and transportation arrangements (ride-sharing etc.) in order to be able to come. We would greatly appreciate a phone call or note from you to confirm that you are coming so that we can plan for food and other arrangements. Since it can be a long trip to the Abbey, depending on where you live, you are very welcome to stay for a few days around this time; early bookings are recommended. And of course we will be happy to advise on weather conditions and other practical matters closer to the time.

In this first year after her death, we are realizing the implications of Rev. Master Jiyu's passing in our daily lives. There is grief, certainly, but moreover a growing awareness of the depth of her spiritual legacy to us. We sincerely hope that you will be able to be with us on this solemn yet joyous occasion.

# THE OLD WOMAN

Rev. Hakuun Barnhard, F.O.B.C.

*[There was a time when the phrase 'old woman' denoted a respect for a lifetime's accumulation of wisdom and skill, of service to the community in all aspects of daily life from birth to death. In modern times the term has become derogatory, signifying that which present day cultures now find difficult--nearly impossible--to accept: the fact of impermanence. The elders of our societies, both men and women, show us that youth, physical strength, "productivity" and "beauty" (when equated with youth) simply do not last and cannot be relied upon. It is the author's hope that the following story<sup>1</sup> and poem<sup>2</sup>, both translated from Chinese sources, will not only restore dignity to but point to an even greater understanding encompassed in the term 'old woman'. Editor]*

## The Old Bodhisattva

Long ago in the Tang dynasty, there lived in the province of Chekiang on the coast, a young man named Hesan. The boy's father had died young without leaving much money, so his mother had to work long days to provide a living for them. The young boy often had to spend the day with others or alone. He used to behave very badly towards his mother, calling her a 'useless old woman' and other bad names and sometimes his temper was so unrestrained that he beat her. The old woman never complained. Now, at twenty, Hesan had not yet married, and fortunately, helped contribute to their daily sustenance.

Now off the coast of Chekiang lies the small island of P'u T'o. Many pilgrims go there to pay their respects to or to catch a glimpse of the Bodhisattva Kuan Yin (Avalokiteshwara), who is full of beauty and Great Compassion, whose fame and good deeds are known all over

China. Hesan often heard her name and stories of her miraculous works; he usually took them as pilgrims' infatuations--how could such tales be true? But he also grew quite curious, and started looking for a chance to cross the sea and find out for himself whether or not the Bodhisattva KuanYin existed.

One day he heard that a neighbour's uncle was to sail with a cargo of pots to the village on P'u T'o Island. At once Hesan asked to come, and he was able to join them in the trip over to the island. There he climbed every mountain and descended into every valley, searching for Kuan Yin. He looked in all the groves and grottos, visited each shrine--but still no sign of the Bodhisattva. Weary and disappointed he lay down on a patch of grass. "Ha! All that talk about a compassionate bodhisattva was just the lies of wicked devils. I've had enough!" he yelled, kicking the air in frustration. Then, being very tired, he fell into a deep sleep while a gentle breeze blew through his hair.

In a dream he met a very old woman in a mountain grove, her face wrinkled with the wrinkles of a hundred years, her hair, silvery as moonlit snow, bound in a small topknot. Leaning on a twisted wooden staff she said, "Hello, Hesan, what brings you here? Why are you kicking the grass?" "Oh, don't talk to me about it!" exclaimed Hesan. "I came all this way to see that famous Bodhisattva Kuan Yin. People say she rides clouds and dragons, and grants us wonderful feelings. I've looked everywhere in these mountains but haven't seen a thing--no sign of the Bodhisattva Kuan Yin anywhere." And he began to sob. "Oh," the old woman asked kindly, "you hoped to find the Bodhisattva?" "Yes, I left my work and my hometown to find her but she is nowhere to be seen." "What a pity," the old woman sighed, "the Bodhisattva has gone out today." "Gone out where?" "She went to your village, Hesan." "To my village? Whatever for?" "Well, the Bodhisattva heard that you had feelings of contrition, that you would like to change into a good-hearted young man, that you even thought

of coming to visit her. She was moved, and immediately went on her way this morning. She did not want you to bother making this long journey." "The Bodhisattva went to my house? Is that true?" "Absolutely. So you'd better hurry back home!" "I'll go at once. But--how will I recognise her? What does she look like? I've never seen her before." "Well, that's very simple. When you get home and knock on the door, an old lady will open it. She will not be wearing any shoes and the moonlight will reflect on her white feet. Once you see her, you must bow down quickly to greet her."

When Hesan awoke the sky was dark. Recalling his dream he hurried to the harbour to catch the earliest boat back to the mainland. Once on shore he ran and ran--home, home, home. It was still dark when he knocked wildly on the door, worried that the Bodhisattva might already have left. His mother, awakened by the noise and hearing the voice of her son, quickly went to the door without taking the time to put on her slippers, for she feared Hesan would be angry if he had to wait and might even scold or beat her. When she opened the door the moonlight fell on her white feet. Hesan, seeing this immediately bowed down and touched the ivory feet ten times with his head. "Oh, Bodhisattva! You came, you're here! Oh, Bodhisattva, thank you!" The old woman, greatly astonished, said "Hesan, are you bowing to the Bodhisattva? But this is me, your mother!" "I know you are the Bodhisattva Kuan Yin," answered Hesan, and he did not dare to lift his head. "I am not the Bodhisattva of Compassion, I'm your mother." "What, you're not? You're Mother?" "Yes--tell me what is happening!"

Then Hesan told his mother all about his journey to P'u T'o Island, about meeting the very old, kind woman with the white hair, and what she had said. Then it occurred to him--of course! The old woman herself was a transformation of the Bodhisattva Kuan Yin! She had appeared to help him change his ways towards his mother, his mother who was always kind and never complained. The wise and

compassionate Bodhisattva! Hesan and his mother turned towards P'u T'o Island from whence the moon shone down upon them. They bowed down in awe on the hard, cold pavement, feeling only the warmth of Great Compassion

### The Old Woman--The Unborn

The term 'Old Woman' occurs in a number of Great Master Dōgen's Chinese poems, as a metaphor for the Eternal Buddha Nature, the Unborn. The following is one such poem, and I pray that my translation and my brief explanatory notes may do it justice.

When you take a pine branch in your hand  
its blossom opens five petals;  
When you take a monk's staff in your hand  
crooked and straight become one.  
At this moment great thunder rumbles  
and the rain of the Dharma pours in  
abundance over heaven and earth;  
Thanks to the Old Woman,  
you enjoy the Spring Breeze.

#### *Pine Branch*

A pine tree is an evergreen - an Ever Green, representing the everlasting life of Buddha. When you know that IT exists and stay close to IT in daily life, realizing IT over and again, then you have 'taken a pine branch in your hand'. In the Chinese text this 'taking in your hand' has two aspects. First, it is we ourselves who must do this. Others can show the way but each of us goes alone, training with our specific conditioning and making our own choices on the Path. At the same time, this is not something that can be forced. We can only take the next step; there are no shortcuts and we must deal with obstacles: see, know and embrace them. Conditions take time to ripen and Truth

unfolds in its own way, naturally.

### *Blossom*

When we keep training eventually the flower of the pine branch will bloom. You may say that you have never seen a pine tree with blossoms; these are no ordinary pink or yellow buds springing forth. The spiritual pine branch blooms with the flower of Eternal Meditation. This flower has five petals, five ‘aspects’ which one can know individually as each petal, and all at once as a flower. Rev. Master Jiyu saw these ‘petals’ as columns of light and explains each one in her book *How to Grow a Lotus Blossom. The Most Excellent Mirror - Samadhi*, one of the scriptures sung daily in temples and monasteries of the Sōtō Zen tradition, speaks of the ‘five branches of the diamond sceptre’. To know this blossom, we need to study ourselves thoroughly and follow the Precepts in depth.

### *Monk’s Staff*

A monk’s staff symbolises the bright, upright mind akin to the upright body in meditation. This mind accepts things as they are, does not find fault with persons or circumstances, nor is it swayed by praise or pride -- it is the mind that does not MOVE. All things are in their own true place, undisturbed. This mind is what we can truly lean on, as on a staff. Here the opposites, ‘crooked and straight’, are transcended.

### *Thunder*

When we start Buddhist training we often experience difficulty in listening to, hearing and following the still, small voice of our True Heart. Yet through our perseverance, one day the Voice will thunder and the rain of the Dharma, the Water of the Spirit, will pour in abundance, washing away all dust. Rev. Master Jiyu describes in the *Lotus Blossom* this cleansing of all notions of self, of attachments and ideas which cause us to feel separate from our True Nature. We are refreshed as if reborn. This new life is the Child of Buddha, the unblemished, energetic life of spring. With the fire of passions extinguished, the air

this life breathes will be cool and fresh as a spring breeze. This Baby Buddha must be nurtured in a Womb with all-accepting tenderness, the Tathagata-womb, the Old Woman. It is thanks to Her activity, Her help that all hindrances to a free and fresh life are removed.

## The Old Master

In Great Master Dōgen's time, a Zen master whether male or female was called an *Old Woman* if she or he compassionately 'fed' their disciples with the Dharma when they were 'hungry' and in need of teaching. Such a master was our Founder, Rev. Master Jiyu. We could speak of her as our spiritual mother and father, or for her grand-disciples, as grandmother and grandfather. As she was a woman and often referred to herself as an 'old monk,' I have recently come to think of her in the honorific used by Dōgen--*the Old Woman*. She lit the way for us on the Dharma road, always pointing beyond the opposites, always sitting on the rock of certainty whether showered with the rain of the Dharma or pounded by waves of karma. She truly had an Old Woman's heart [Chinese: p'o hsin], a soft, accepting, open and compassionate heart. This is not only the kindness of an old grandmother--IT is the heart of Truth Itself, the Tathagata-womb, SHE who embraces all.

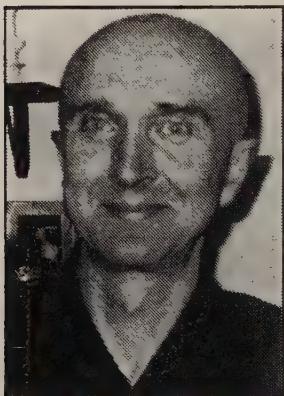
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### Notes

1. Kuan-shih-yin P'u Sa, *Compassionate Buddha*, (Educational Children's Books Vol. 2, Taipei, Taiwan, 2521 B.E.) pp 20-25.
2. Okubo Dōshū, Dōgen Zenji Zenshū, Vol. 2: *Dōgen Oshō Kōroku* (Tokyo 1969), p. 187, poem 5.

## Visit by the Head of our Order

Rev. Master Daishin Morgan and the entire community of Throssel Hole Priory were honoured and delighted to receive our first visit from Rev. Master Daizui MacPhillamy, the newly elected Head of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives. Rev. Master Daizui arrived



from the United States on April 10 and was greeted cordially by all monks in the Ceremony Hall. During the following days and weeks Rev. Master Daizui met with and came to know personally individual monks and postulants, the community as a whole and specific groups, such as monks from continental Europe and the novitiate. Rev. Master's stated purpose, in his first tea with us, was that this visit be an opportunity for those of us who did not already know him to be able to become acquainted, as this would help foster mutual trust and harmony within

the Sangha. He directed much of his attention during his time here to the laity: to congregation members visiting Throssel for such events as the Family Weekend, the Wesak and Manjusri festivals, the Lay Ministers' retreat in June and those able to come to the Telford and Reading Priories during his visits there. Both laity and monks were pleased to have Rev. Master Daizui deliver Dharma talks to us--several after festival-ceremonies, some delivered to the Lay Ministers and the many talks he gave during the monks' spring retreat, at Rev. Master's Daishin's invitation. We are truly grateful for Rev. Master Daizui's generous sharing of his training and his teaching while with us.

When not meeting with us or lecturing, Rev. Master Daizui dealt with administrative matters of the Order, first taking time to explain how the Order is structured and functions, and emphasizing that

individual members constitute the Order; he clarified the interactive relationship between the members and Head of the Order, as well as our mutual responsibilities especially as regards communicating with each other. One of his major concerns was the conferring of the Charter of Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey (please see the accompanying articles in this *Journal* on both the O.B.C. and Charter).

Between activities, Rev. Master Daizui thoroughly enjoyed viewing some of Northumberland's dramatic countryside, and becoming acquainted with Throssel's teeming bird population. A visit to Durham Cathedral and University held special meaning for him because of his twenty-plus years as Rev. Master Jiyu's personal assistant (Chaplain); Rev. Master Jiyu studied at and received her music degree from Durham and had recounted many happy memories of her time there. A keen gardener as well, Rev. Master Daizui was particularly glad to be in Britain during some of our loveliest months of budding trees and burgeoning flowers.

On June 5th the Community at Throssel formally bade farewell to the Head of our Order, again in the Ceremony Hall. We presented Rev. Master Daizui with a Fountain Sceptre made by Abbey monks here, and with a "good British woolen neck scarf" for his travels, to express our appreciation for his presence and teaching. His warmth, humour and concern for all members of the Order have made a deep impression on us, and already we look forward to his next visit.

\* \* \*

# The Conferring of the Charter of Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey

Twenty-five years after its founding, Throssel Hole Buddhist Priory, in a simple yet moving ceremony was presented with a Charter conferring on it the status of an Abbey. Rev. Master Daizui MacPhillamy, Head of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives, presented the hand-calligraphed and illuminated Charter to Rev. Master Daishin Morgan, Abbot, in the Ceremony Hall of Throssel Hole Buddhist Priory on May 3rd, 1997. Present as ceremonial participants and witnesses were the entire monastic community and many congregation members and their families.

The Charter ceremony began with an incense offering of gratitude in the Priory's Founder's Shrine to the Founder, Great Master Hōun Jiyu-Kennett, to her Master, the Very Reverend Keidō Chisan Kōhō and to all the previous Buddhas and Ancestors. After this all monks processed to the Ceremony Hall where Rev. Hōgetsu Keith, a former Prior, offered incense at the main altar on behalf of all the previous Priors and priests of the temple. Rev. Master Daizui then processed to the main altar and offer incense with the following dedication:

We offer this incense with bows of gratitude to Shakyamuni Buddha and all the Ancestors down to the Founder of this monastery, Great Master Hōun Jiyu, to the former Priors of Throssel Hole Priory down to your Abbot of this present day, and to all who have trained here and built and supported this monastery over the years. You have brought into being this excellent place of Buddhist training and have made possible what we are about to do here today. To you all we are truly grateful.

Three bows and the chanting of *The Most Excellent Mirror - Samadhi* were done by all present, then Rev. Master Daizui took the Charter, dedicated it at the altar, turned to all the participants displaying the Charter and said the following:



Now, with the advice and consent of the Advisory Council of the Order and of the Abbot and community of Throssel Hole Buddhist Priory, and by the authority vested in me by the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives, I make and proclaim this resolution: Be it known that Throssel Hole Buddhist Priory, in recognition of its continuing development, is hereby authorised to be known and established as Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey, a training monastery of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives, to serve as a seminary and sub-registry thereof pursuant to the Bylaws and Rules of the Order.

Rev. Master Daizui then presented the Charter to Rev. Master Daishin, who placed it on the main altar in front of the statue of the Buddha. On either side of the Charter were vases of silver and gold paper lotuses given to Rev. Master Jiyu many years ago by her Master, Kōhō Zenji for 'her first British temple' of his lineage, an undertaking which had been very important to him. Rev. Master Jiyu's portrait was also

displayed beside the altar. The chief Celebrant and Abbot then bowed side by side towards the altar and towards each other, after which the Precentor read:

We offer the merit of our recitation of *The Most Excellent Mirror - Samadhi* in gratitude to Shakyamuni Buddha in order to dedicate Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey for the good of all living beings. When Indra pointed a blade of grass at the earth a magnificent temple sprang up in that very spot, for wherever a true Heart exists, the Dharma springs up also. May we rededicate ourselves to the path of the great Unborn and allow the True Heart to manifest in our lives and reveal the springtime of enlightenment. We offer our gratitude to all those who have made possible the development of Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey. We remember especially our Founder, Great Master Hōun Jiyu and offer our gratitude for her generous heart. May the doors of this Abbey always stand open wide for all who seek the Way, may the Abbey prosper and may all who take refuge here quickly realise the Truth.

All present affirmed this with the Three homages and three full bows, after which the celebrants, Abbot and monastic community recessed from the Hall.

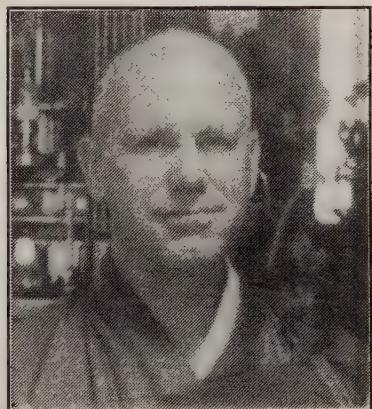
The congregation then met with Rev. Master Daizui and Rev. Master Daishin for a joyful gathering in the lecture hall, where the Charter was put on display for all to view. The wording of the Charter, written out in Gothic Blackletter and vermillion Roman capitals, is framed in a border of classic acanthus leaves painted in shades of spring green. At centre-top, two leaves support a 'Ship and Three Drums' symbol, emblem of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives referring to the Ship of the Dharma ferrying all beings to the Other Shore, and the great Drums of compassion, love and wisdom. Beside the emblem perch two brown-painted throssels (thrushes) from which the Abbey's location and the Abbey itself derive their names. The illuminated first initial 'B' as well as the Ship and Three Drums are embossed with genuine gold-leaf, and a third throssel (painted on a twining branch atop the capital letter) 'proclaims the good tidings' from its open, gilded beak.

\* \* \*

## Visit by an Old Friend and Former Prior

It is always good to see an old friend, and so it was when Rev. Jishō Perry, M.O.B.C. arrived on 18th June from California, where he is Prior of the Santa Barbara Buddhist Priory. The first of the "American Priors" to come over from Shasta Abbey in August 1976, Rev. Jishō's ten-month stay was pivotal for us. He oversaw the purchase of the Priory's land and buildings, then, drawing on his past as a lawyer, he set up the Priory's Charitable Trust and since that time has been one of Throssel's Trustees. The more senior monks here recall how Rev. Jishō's direct teaching methods, irrepressible good spirits (and fondness for puns) stood them in good stead during the always challenging novitiate time, and also the frequently financially lean times experienced by a fledgling Priory. While he was here as Prior, Rev. Master Jiyu asked him to perform the ceremonies of Transmission with Rev. Daishin; thus Rev. Jishō is an important and integral part of Throssel's spiritual family; his lectures to us on Great Master Keizan's *Denkōrōku* have shown us yet another facet of his many years of training. (He also plans to accompany Rev. Fuden to Germany in July and lecture at a retreat there)

Throssel's 'atmospheric weather' i.e. a damp and misty June has not prevented him from visiting the lovely stands of trees he planted so many years ago, initiating Throssel's reforestation project. Rev. Jishō expressed his joy at the Priory's growth as well, that the slender 'tree' firmly planted by Rev. Master Jiyu and nurtured by himself has become a flourishing monastic community and Abbey. We, too, are indeed glad to greet and thank a monk who has done so much for Throssel; may his next visit come much sooner than another twenty years.



# How the O.B.C. Works

**Rev. Daizui MacPhillary, M.O.B.C  
Head of the Order**

In the last issue of the *Journal [of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives]* we promised to provide a brief description of the Order and how its structure works, for the benefit of those who do not happen to be familiar with the ins-and-outs of our bylaws and rules (which, I must admit, are a bit long and complex to inspire reading for pleasure).

The Order of Buddhist Contemplatives was founded in 1978 and incorporated in 1983 by Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, who was the Head of the Order until her death. The fact that it has been in operation for these last nineteen years may have gone largely unnoticed by many of our readers because Rev. Master was not only Head of the Order but also Abbess of Shasta Abbey and the master or grandmaster of all our monks, and there was no particular reason to point out which actions she undertook in which capacity. Her long illness also made the operation of the Order less apparent: as she was unable to travel to visit our various monasteries and priories (a pleasant duty in which I am currently actively engaged), she had to delegate some of the Order functions to abbey and priory officers, and she had to do her taking of advice and making of decisions informally, when and where she had the strength, whereas my health permits these things to be done more publicly, with the officers, councils, and committees outlined below. Thus, while it may seem that the Order is taking on more prominence since Rev. Master's death, what is actually happening is that something that has been going on for these past nineteen years has simply become more apparent and more distinguishable from other things.

There are three basic purposes for the Order, as defined in its

bylaws. One of these is to provide a means by which its members may govern themselves. This governing function is carried out primarily through a set of rules (and procedures for their administration) which are typically initially enacted by the Head of the Order with the advice and consent of various councils of senior monks, and then reviewed for adoption or amendment by a conclave of all seniors held every ten years. The existence of this governing function is one reason that the membership of the Order is limited to those of us who have undertaken a ministerial function: monks, postulants, and Lay Ministers. You have the right to expect of us that we establish and uphold a specified and public set of ethical standards and rules of conduct. On the other hand, while we have a duty to explain the Precepts to you, our friends in the congregation, and encourage you to follow them, it would be inappropriate for us to in any sense attempt to exercise a "governing" function over you.

A similar situation exists with regard to the second function of the O.B.C., which is to assure that the practice and teaching you find among our members and at our temples is that of the Serene Reflection Meditation (*Sōtō Zen*) tradition of Buddhism, as passed on to us by Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett. Here again, while you have a right to expect that we who exercise some teaching or ministering role have a way of being able to assure this to you, it would be improper for us to attempt to "assure" that your personal practice met some particular set of standards. Within the Order, this "assuring" function is principally carried out by the fact that the members do continue to practice and pass on the teachings to the best of our ability. Only secondarily is it brought about by the fact that the Order, through its officers and committees, is responsible for the continuing authorization of the various temples to function in its name and of the training monasteries to certify priests and teachers in its name. Rev. Master used to use the analogy of a jar of pickles to explain this "assuring" function: if the label says "dill pickles", then the contents may be sliced crosswise or lengthwise and be of various degrees of saltiness, but they'd better all

have that recognizable “dill pickle” taste. And so it is with your Lay Ministers and monks: the Order is not there to impose an oppressive uniformity upon them (which, among other things, would kill the very spirit Rev. Master passed on to us), but rather to help assure that the Dharma you receive from us has, and will continue to have, that distinctive “flavor” of Serene Reflection Meditation Buddhism. And it most certainly does.

The third, and to my mind most important, function of the O.B.C. is to “bind together” its members and congregations into one harmonious sangha. I say that this is the most important function because I know that if we succeed in staying together in this way we will undoubtedly end up adequately governing ourselves and assuring you that we continue to keep true to our practice. And while the Order officers and staff can do some things to help in this regard, such as promoting harmony between the members and between temples, being available for refuge and counsel, and attempting to take into account the concerns and circumstances of everyone in exercising the other two functions, it is really only the members themselves and you, the lay congregation, who can actually create and maintain unity and harmony in our little branch of the Buddhist Sangha. Since we do have a shared common approach to Buddhist training, what is needed is simply that we continue in that training and each commit ourselves to functioning harmoniously with each other, to finding ways of resolving our differences when they do occur, and, above all, to never giving up on each other. If we each do these things, albeit imperfectly, the teachings which Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett gave to us will not only endure but will flourish and benefit innumerable beings, whether directly or indirectly.

So, while organization and structure are hardly the most important aspects of our Order, we do make some use of them as one of the ways of assisting us to realize what is important. And since these structural aspects are there to be used, it makes sense to render them

explicit to you so that you can make use of them more easily. Because the purpose of what follows is to provide a practical, abbreviated, look at the structural aspects of our Order, the information is of necessity incomplete and over-simplified. However, since we all work together and take refuge in each other, those inevitable inaccuracies shouldn't matter too much; don't worry about "bringing issues of the Order to the wrong person": there is no "wrong person" in a harmonious sangha.

*Head of the Order:* Rev. Daizui MacPhillamy. The functions of this office will hopefully be clarified by the chart below.

*Assistant Head of the Order:* Rev. Haryo Young. Represents and acts on behalf of the Head of the Order when the latter is away, ill or otherwise unable to do so; together with the Abbots of Shasta and Throssel, provides on-going guidance and refuge to the Head of the Order.

*Executive Secretary:* Rev. Meian Elbert. Chief administrative officer of the Order; exercises general supervision of all temporal affairs of the Order (keeping records of the membership, dealing with government agencies, issuing certificates and identification cards, keeping Rules updated and available to members, etc.).

*Corporate Secretary:* Rev. Hōgetsu Keith. Takes, keeps, and distributes minutes of corporate meetings and decisions.

*Treasurer.* Rev. Teigan Stevens. Directs financial affairs of the O.B.C. corporation. Our chief sources of income are donations and *Journal* subscriptions. Our chief expenses are the publication of the *Journal*, travel costs of Head, Assistant Head and Lay Ministry Chaplain, insurance, and general office expenses.

*Corporate Counsel:* Rev. Jishō Perry. Provides legal advice and guidance to all the other officers.

*Journal Editor.* Rev. Chūshin Passmore. Edits and supervises production of the *Journal of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives*.

*Lay Ministry Chaplain:* Rev. Mugo White. Co-ordinates Lay Ministry. Together with Abbots and Priors, provides guidance and refuge to lay ministers and supervises their functions.

Advisory Council: Consists of all of the above plus Rev. Masters Ekō Little and Daishin Morgan, and Revs. Kōshin Schomberg, Mokugen Kublicki, Saidō Kennaway, Fudōshin Beaver, Meidō Tuttle and Mildred Laeser. The Head of the Order seeks the advice and consent of this council in the making of important decisions such as the ones outlined in the chart below. In matters of great gravity, a wider council is created, such as a council of all Rev. Masters or even of all ordained members.

Other Officers.

*Head of Oral Teaching Project*: Rev. Kinsei Tower. Supervises transcription, editing, and publication of selected lectures given by Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett over the years. (Yes, books are forthcoming!)

*Chaplain to the Head of the Order*: Rev. Fudōshin Beaver. Assists Head of the Order in ceremonial functions and provides whatever other assistance may be needed for him to carry out his functions.

Standing Committee on Priories: Revs. Daishin Yalon (Chairperson), Zenshō Roberson, and Kōdō Kay. Provides refuge and guidance to Priors of free-standing priories and their congregations, particularly in situations of difficulties between Priors and congregations. Free-standing priories are those which are directly under the supervision of the Order; all North American priories are of this type at the moment. For sub-priories (priories which are under the supervision of an abbey), the Abbot of the abbey fulfills the role of the Standing Committee; all European priories are currently of this type.

*Functions of the Head of the Order and of the Abbots of abbeys.*

The Chart below is a very rough attempt to indicate the relative functions of the Head of the Order and of the Abbot of either of our two training monasteries. As the corporate structures and rules of Shasta Abbey and Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey are slightly different, what follows is definitely an approximation. Although for the present purposes it is useful to make distinctions and draw little boxes, in reality the Head of the Order and the two Abbots work closely together and often the 'distinctions' between their roles fade into a

complete partnership.

<i>Head of the Order</i>	<i>Abbot of a Monastery</i>
Available for refuge and guidance to all members and their congregations.	Available for refuge and guidance to monastic community, sub-priories, and congregation.
Acts as seniormost ordained member of Order: “elder brother” to Abbots and Priors; “uncle” to all monks of the Order	Acts as seniormost ordained member of the community: “father” of all monks in the community.
Formulates & modifies rules of the Order to cover issues common to all members, such as functions of priesthood, ethical standards, conduct of priories, guidelines for lay ministers, etc. All rules are provisional until ratified or amended by a Conclave of all seniors every 10 years. Rules of the Order apply to all members, including Head of Order and Abbots.	Formulates & modifies rules of the monastery to cover issues specific to that community, such as seminary operations, finances & property, monastic dress, health & safety, etc. All rules are to be made in consultation with senior officers, with respect for the rights of all.
Convenes Disciplinary Councils and otherwise enforces Order rules for the benefit of all. Is the final source of appeal in disciplinary matters.	Same, but for rules of the monastery.

<i>Head of the Order</i>	<i>Abbot of a Monastery</i>
Authorizes monasteries to act as seminaries of Order and assures the overall quality of training.	Establishes and supervises the operation of the seminary program and awards certification.
Authorizes establishment of priories and meditation groups; appoints Priors of free-standing priories.	Supervises local meditation groups and all sub-priorities; appoints their priors in consultation with Head of the Order.
Represents the Order & its members in relations with other Buddhists, governments, etc.	Represents monastery; frequently asked to represent Order when Head of Order unable to do so.
Represents Order and Lineage at special ceremonies; occasionally acts as celebrant, when invited by Abbots or Priors.	Acts as celebrant for most major ceremonies.
Occasionally provides religious instruction, when invited by Abbots or Priors.	Regularly provides religious instruction to community and congregation.
Promotes harmony within whole Order, which includes harmony within & between communities.	Promotes harmony within & between communities, which amounts to harmony of the whole Order.

<i>Head of the Order</i>	<i>Abbot of a Monastery</i>
Although, as implied above, there is a general principle of mutual refuge-taking within the Sangha, the head of the Order has the final authority for the conduct of the general affairs of the Order.	Same, but final authority is for the conduct of the general affairs of the monastery.

Given the many responsibilities suggested in the above chart, one might well wonder to whom the Head of the Order and the Abbots can turn for advice and refuge. As I alluded to earlier, we regularly turn to each other, and the Head of the Order also relies heavily upon the Assistant Head of the Order. In addition, we have access to the good counsel both of all of our senior officers (who mutually take refuge in each other) and also of the "aunts" and "uncles" in our extended sangha family in Malaysia and Japan. I believe firmly that, through all of these mutually interlocking links of refuge-taking and through the natural checks and balances implied in the division of responsibilities between the various officers of the Order and its communities, we will keep close to the Buddha's Way, which is the Source to which our late Master kept true.

\* — \* \*

# Kuken Again, or All That's Certain Isn't Enlightenment

Rev. Daizui MacPhillamy, M.O.B.C.

In the autumn 1989 issue of this *Journal [of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives]*, I wrote an article on a serious spiritual mistake known as *kuken*.<sup>1</sup> My understanding of it at the time was mostly theoretical, but as I believe that I now may have seen an extreme case of it, there is some additional information to pass along.

The reader may wish to refer to the original article for a detailed description of the twin delusions upon which this mistake is founded, but for convenience I will give a brief summary here. The first unfortunate axiom of kuken is that *Ku (sunyata)* is “void” in the negative sense: that the only True Reality is one’s own egocentric mind, and that nothing other than the products of that mind have any value or reality. The second axiom is that the enlightened person is not subject to the law of karma and that he or she is above the Precepts. Thus, the practitioner of kuken takes guidance only from what he believes to be his certain, personal experience of Buddha, ignoring and even defaming the Dharma Treasure and the Sangha Treasure. The original article mentioned some possible consequences of this spiritual sidetrack and offered possible means to prevent getting ensnared by it. The rest of the present article is devoted to presenting some additional information derived from actual observation.

1. The development of kuken may not take place overnight: it appears to take time to fully slide into its grip. If this is really true, no one who trains with a live teacher and/or in a sangha of real people needs to fall prey to it (unless that teacher and/or sangha are already themselves practicing it). But simply being in the physical proximity of

a teacher and/or a sangha isn't enough: one has to actually take refuge in them. By this I mean asking them real questions about the true state of one's training, trusting them enough to show them what one is really like, and actually trying to do what they advise. In the beginning, of course, it takes time to develop trust in a teacher or a sangha, and perhaps that is just as well, as we do not wish to follow those who may lead us astray. After a point, however, it is time to either trust the people around us or to look elsewhere for those to whom to go for refuge. Should the point ever come where one concludes, for whatever reason, that one has gone beyond the necessity of seeking the advice of others, then one becomes in danger of going into kuken. At such a time, even if one is training in the midst of a fully functioning sangha with an excellent teacher, one might as well be totally isolated, since there is no further refuge taken in real, live people who can point the way away from kuken. This point applies no matter how long one has been training or how spiritually "advanced" one may think that one may be.

From my observations, the most common reasons for not taking real refuge in one's teacher and sangha are that teachers are human and that you might get hurt if you trust your fellow sangha members. Yes, they are; yes, you might. So what? This is, after all, the human realm we are in, not some heaven. There is no magic. Buddhism, as Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett is fond of saying, is a religion for spiritual adults. Look realistically at the alternatives to trusting a human teacher and a human sangha. One is to find charlatans who claim to be the magical perfect beings of your fantasies. A second is to delude yourself into thinking that your teacher and/or sangha are such beings when they make it quite clear that they are not and never have claimed to be so. A third is to take refuge in no one, thus risking sliding off into kuken and all sorts of other sidetracks. Are these options really preferable to training with fallible but experienced and good-hearted people who are honestly doing their best, just as you are? And when misunderstandings or mistakes do arise and you feel hurt, it may help to remember that it is the self that suffers: Buddha Natures may be compatible with

spiritual joy, empathic sadness for the grief of the world, the compassion of Avalokiteshwara, and the love of Samantabhadra; bodies may feel pain; but only selves suffer. I know that is cold comfort at the time (at least it is to me), but it may be of some help later in gaining perspective and in learning from difficult situations. And in the big picture, surely an occasionally bruised ego is better than rank delusion!

2. Kuken may be an error that is particularly likely in the meditative schools of Buddhism, as it seems to rely for its practical operation on a fundamental misunderstanding of the meditative process. Since we are in a meditative tradition, we are at risk, and it may behoove us to pay attention to what we are calling “meditation”. If your experience of meditation is like mine, you know that all sorts of mental “stuff” comes to mind while you are sitting there: not only logical, discursive thoughts, but also feelings, emotions, sensations, perceptions, stray flashes of insight (which sometimes prove to be accurate and sometimes prove to be sheer nonsense), hunches, desires, and all manner of assorted, unconnected “stream of consciousness” thoughts. It is also possible, when some of this has quieted down a little, to experience a qualitative shift which puts you in touch with what I would describe as a nearby layer of the unconscious, containing altered perceptions, fantasies, more insights (again, some true, others not), inexplicable impulses, a sense of mission or direction or higher guidance, knowledge of some things not accessible to the rational intellect, and so on. And, if you really want something exotic, you can push yourself to the point where another qualitative shift will occur and a whole third set of “stuff” will come up: out-of-body experiences, spirit guides, telepathic insights, predictions of future events, mind reading, and/or all manner of other psychic phenomena (as above: sometimes accurate, sometimes self-serving nonsense). What I was taught about meditation was to drop the whole lot of this stuff: to bring my attention back to just sitting (or just peeling the potatoes or whatever it is that I am doing at the moment). And I was taught that

when one does drop it, sometimes one can know basic Truth, simply and quietly, from the direct experience of the senses. And I was taught that such Truth, if properly realized, is, and always will be, one with the Source of the Precepts, and that It will thus be manifest in the Preceptual quality of one's daily life.

But suppose one were to identify some of the "stuff" with enlightenment? Not the rational, discursive thinking, of course, (since "everyone knows that isn't enlightenment"), but some of the rest, be it of the usual, the nearby unconscious, or the exotic sort. "Meditation" now becomes the process of quieting down the rational discursive thinking just enough to get access to one's "stuff". Now one has a shortcut to the "Truth" at all times: no troublesome work of mindfulness, no tough ethical Preceptual decision-making, no "interference" from teachers or sangha—all one has to do is to stop thinking for a moment and whatever "comes up" in one's "meditation" is "Truth". One feels "free", "spontaneous", "certain", "different", "superior". Can we really blame such a person for entertaining the possibility that this might be enlightenment?

A lot of people toy with a bit of this in the course of training, and the vast majority of us give it up either because it leads towards counter-Preceptual behavior, we get a good kick in the rearmost parts from our teacher or sangha friends for being goofy, or because it simply doesn't work out well in terms of its consequences. And, instead, we eventually learn both how to truly allow body and mind to fall away (as described in the article in this issue by Rev. Haryo Young, M.O.B.C.), and how to truly ask things in meditation (as described in the article on that topic by Rev. Daishin Morgan, M.O.B.C. in the autumn-winter 1995 issue of this Journal). But suppose that we have already discounted the value of both the Precepts and the Sangha: all that is left to save us from the kuken approach is that its consequences are harmful. But to discern that requires thought, and if one happens at this point to seriously commit oneself to no thinking, then all the "brakes"

are off and we can careen down the hill directly into kuken.

3. Once there, it appears that one can justify every selfish impulse as the manifestation of enlightenment and despise all of those “small-minded” people who do not share our absolute commitment to “meditation”. This leads me to the next observation: although kuken may take time to fall into, once one is truly caught in it, it seems to be very difficult to get out of. When I was investigating various scriptural references on the problem, I was startled by the fact that there were plenty of suggestions on how to prevent it but almost none on how to cure it. Consequences were mentioned (mostly various hells), but few cures. Now I think I may know why: kuken becomes a closed system in which every event is seen in the light of the delusion. Positive events become confirmatory “signs”; painful ones become “tests” of one’s commitment to the “Path”. One person in this state, faced with the facts that they had violated the major Precepts, some of the gravest parts of the Vinaya, and even the criminal law, simply replied, “Buddhas do what Buddhas do.” As I understand it, this means, “Since I am enlightened, everything I do is a manifestation of enlightenment and can leave no karmic residue; thus I am beyond all worldly bonds such as Precepts, Vinayas, and laws.” Once one is in this state there is literally nothing anyone can do or say to help: whatever is said or done will either be taken as support of their position or as evidence of the “unenlightened mind” of the person trying to help. And the farther the person goes into the delusion, the more certain of it they must become, since to do anything else is to run the risk of having to recognize the true harm they have caused; the longer it has gone on and the more harm one has done, the larger the mountain of one’s karma becomes, the more devastating it is to face, and the more the person is motivated to keep turning away from reality. Thus I can understand that until life becomes a true hell (either of this world or the next), the practitioner of kuken is unlikely to give it up.

4. Unless, that is, he or she breaks down physically or mentally first.

The wholehearted practice of kuken seems to place a terrible drain on the body and mind. I suppose it is because one constantly must keep from being aware of great chunks of reality in order to continue practicing it. After a while, a certain look develops. Try examining a photograph of Rasputin, noting particularly the eyes; I cannot know for sure, but I suspect you may be looking at a portrait of full-blown kuken. Depending on the strength of one's constitution and on the level of one's commitment to the practice, one may last for many years or burn out in a few.

Not everyone, of course, is completely committed to their given spiritual practice, and the same is true for the practitioners of kuken. I suspect that the majority, whose involvement is half-hearted, go about their lives rather normally except for a pervasive inward spiritual pride and an outward aura of manipulative superiority, punctuated by the occasional flagrant self-serving impulsive act justified in the name of their religion. This was the type referred to in my previous article. What I had not realized before was that it is possible for a person with misguided courage to take kuken to its natural extreme, sever all "ties" to Dharma, Sangha, and common sense, and make the uncompromising practice of kuken their whole life.

5. I should not have been surprised at this, however, since kuken and its consequences are not simply a modern, Western problem; they have been known and described in the East for centuries. The Buddha Himself is quoted as warning against the views that there are no consequences of wrongdoing and that only one's own views are the source of Truth.<sup>2</sup> The Surangama Sutra, a major Mahayana scripture known since at least the Eighth Century, discusses in its final chapter the dangers both of mistaking the products of one's egocentric mind for enlightenment and of mistaking the negative void for Supreme Truth.<sup>3</sup> Great Master Eihei Dōgen wrote in the Thirteenth Century in his discourses on the Buddha Nature and on the law of karma that two grave but not uncommon mistakes among trainees of his day were to

confuse the impulses of one's own mind for the enlightened Wisdom of the Buddha Nature and to believe that enlightened persons are beyond the law of karma.<sup>4</sup> In the same discourse he warns not to regard the "emptiness" of sunyata as "empty" in the negative sense. Other references are given in the 1989 article. As to the prevalence of the problem, several books on the practice of Chinese Buddhism indicate that "wild monks" (*yeh ho-shang*) have been a perennial problem in that country.<sup>5</sup> These were monks who disregarded their Vinaya vows and made public spectacles of themselves by their outrageous behavior. Expelled or refused admission by conscientious monasteries, they wandered the countryside engaging in various bizarre or criminal behaviors, objects of disgust or derision by the general population. While some "wild monks" were no doubt insane or simply criminals dressed in monastic garb, one cannot help but notice the similarity between the descriptions of their behaviors and those characteristic of *kuken* practitioners.

6. Cute stories, taken out of context and published in anthologies of enlightenment experiences, don't help this problem. As these stories sometimes involve strange, outlandish, unconventional, or counter-Preceptual behavior, they can lead the reader to think of such actions as the normal course of events for Buddhist masters. There are several difficulties with these stories. First, while some anthologies are done by reliable translators working from recognized, classical Buddhist texts, this is not always the case so, unless you are careful, you have no idea of what you are reading or where it is from. Second, not all of the stories are examples of fully enlightened action (see, for example, Great Master Eihei Dōgen's commentaries on the *kōans* of Nansen's cat or Tokusan's rice cake<sup>6</sup>). Some can be misleading or even dangerous if taken literally (as Master Dōgen points out in the cases of Joshu's "Mu" and Nangaku's "killing the Buddha"<sup>7</sup>). In others, the context may be missing: the years of quiet, conscientious training before and after the events narrated in the story, the extremity of the deluded thinking of the student whom the master was attempting to

assist and all of the more ordinary ways of help that had already been tried, the regrets of the master for having violated even a minor Precept even in the service of keeping a greater one. Still others were probably intended only as an "antidote" to a specific "poison" of delusion in a specific individual, not as a general description of enlightened behavior. There is no doubt that the great teachers of Buddhism have used such stories from time to time, but they use them to illustrate a point, not as their sources of scriptural precedent or personal inspiration.

7. The previous article on this subject concluded with a discussion of ways to prevent oneself from becoming ensnared by kuken. It might not be amiss to summarize them at the conclusion of this one.

- a. Recognize that kuken exists, is both subtle and highly attractive in its beginning stages, and that no one is immune to it.
- b. Study under a well-qualified living teacher, using the most reliable translations available of the major Buddhist scriptures.
- c. Remember that the Precepts are one of the foundations of all schools of Buddhist practice (albeit in slightly differing variations); beware of anything that offers you "freedom" from the Precepts rather than freedom within Them.
- d. Always take refuge in all three of the Treasures of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Beware of anything that tells you that one stands against the others.

To these I would now add:

- e. Do not be secretive; let your training be as an "open book" to your fellow trainees: there is never a need to keep good training secret.
- f. Those who look for shortcuts are apt to find

only sidetracks.

g. "To live by Zen is the same as to live an ordinary daily life."<sup>8</sup> Resist the temptation to seek magic, extraordinary "powers" or experiences, or to be "somebody special". The greatest masters of old simply got up in the morning, went to meditation, ate when they were hungry, worked every day that they were able, followed the Precepts, and slept when they were tired.

\*

#### Notes

1. Rev. Daizui MacPhillary, "Kuken, Or When is a Void Not Void?" *The Journal of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives*, Autumn 2533 B.E. (1989), Vol. 4, No. 3: 9–16.
2. *The Middle Length Sayings* (Majjhima-Nikaya), trans. I. B. Horner (Oxford: The Pali Text Society, 1990), Vol. III, p. 260.
3. *The Surangama Sutra*, trans. Lu K'uan Yu (Bombay: B. I. Publications, 1966), pp. 201–209.
4. Great Master Eihei Dōgen, "Busshō (Buddha-nature)" in *Shōbōgenzō*, trans. Kōsen Nishiyama et al., 4 vols. (Tokyo: Nakayama Shobō, 1983), Vol. 4, pp. 120–140.  
Dōgen, "Jinshin Inga (Deep belief in causality)", ibid., Vol. 3, pp. 96–101.
5. Holmes Welch, *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 16 & 17.  
Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 234 & 235.
- Karl L. Reichelt, *Truth and Tradition in Chinese Mahayana Buddhism*, trans. K. Van Wagenen Bugge (New York: Paragon, 1968), p. 233.
6. Great Master Eihei Dōgen, *Shōbōgenzō-zuimonki*, trans. Shohaku Okumura (Kyōto, Japan: Kyōto Sōtō-Zen Center, 1987), pp. 28–34.
7. Dōgen, "Busshō (Buddha-nature)", in *Shōbōgenzō*, Vol. 4, pp. 137 & 138.  
Dōgen, "Zazenshin (Admonitions for zazen)", in *Shōbōgenzō*, Vol. 4, p. 51.
8. Dōgen, "Rules for Meditation" in *The Liturgy of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives for the Laity* (Mt. Shasta, California: Shasta Abbey Press, 1987), p. 107.

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## **Trusting My Training**

**George Norwell, Lay Minister, O.B.C.**

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One of the major issues in my own practice over the last two years has been that of taking responsibility for my own training and being prepared to show (expose?) it to the world, which obviously includes my fellow lay ministers. I would like to describe some of this ongoing process in the hope that you might find it useful and also in the hope that some of you might feedback some of your own related experiences in future issues of *The Thread*.

For quite a while I felt that to do my training, to go up to Throssel when I could, check things out and having got some feedback, carry on, was the way to do things. Gradually over the last year or so I began to get the feeling that what I was doing amounted to asking for permission to do my training. It began to feel that what I was doing was to attempt to solve the problems in my practice, present the solutions like a homework exercise, get a tick from teacher, then move on. Though in a sense this hasn't changed, since I still need and want to check things out from time to time, there has been a change in that I am now slowly learning to trust my own checking system. The difference is subtle and important. For a long time I was, in a very real sense, putting the responsibility for my training on Rev. Master Daishin and the other senior monks. I could blunder along, but hopefully they would tell me if I was going wrong. Now I feel the need to be more responsible for what is going on and the direction in which I need to go, though still with the possibility and need to touch base as and when needed. It is very important to take refuge in our teachers, but

ultimately we have to take refuge in the Eternal and listen to what comes from the Eternal. Listening to the Heart is in the end the only way forward. The problem is that I listen but don't always hear. Also no one can teach me how to listen - I have to do it. I also have to find out that I don't always hear what I think I hear. My perception is sometimes good and sometimes not so good. But if I never try it out and find out when I get it wrong, I will never really be able to increase my sensitivity. I have to trust that my listening equipment is fully functional and learn how to use it to my best ability. That means getting things wrong from time to time - making mistakes!

The process of taking responsibility or “owning”, to use an in-word, is one that takes a bit of getting used to. If things go well, that's fine, but if I get it wrong, then I have to take responsibility for that too. And I do get things wrong and will no doubt continue to do so. But that's OK too. There are very few situations in everyday life where getting it wrong leads to irretrievable situations. That doesn't imply complacency, but facing up to reality. If I get it wrong, there are consequences, maybe painful ones; but one thing I have learned, particularly in the last two years, is that I have the resources (which includes good friends in the Sangha) to try not to run away from pain, but learn from it. I am beginning to see more clearly how I inflicted a lot of suffering, though not all of it, on myself. Learning about the first and second Noble Truths, particularly the second, the causes of suffering, is vital.

In the Kyōjukaimon, Rev. Master Jiyu talks about “not causing another to make a mistake in Buddhism” and “Ask the Lord of the House at all times before you do anything whatsoever.” These and the Bodhisattva Vows have and still do at various times scare me and challenge me. I often refuse, ignore and avoid the challenge usually because I fear I can't meet it. The spectrum of my responses to trying to avoid making a mistake in training goes from the “I mustn't make a mistake so I won't do anything that might allow me to make a mistake”

viewpoint (as soon as that view arises, the mistake has already been made) to the other end of the spectrum where it's "I can't not make a mistake, so it doesn't really matter what I do" viewpoint (again a big mistake). In fact there is a middle way, although I tend to end up at the "make a few mistakes" end of the spectrum. At least if you move and make a mistake you can learn from it. Similarly I've avoided asking what I should do since I felt I wouldn't be up to doing what was asked. As for the Bodhisattva Vows - phew! I'm slowly beginning to learn that whilst "T" may not be up to the challenge, there is that which is, my true Nature, my Buddha-nature. I need to trust the response that comes from it, in other words I need to trust that which develops through training. In learning to trust our training, we also need to trust ourselves enough to truly take refuge in the Three Treasures. An important aspect of this is learning to listen to our heart, to be still, to let go of our opinions. Sometimes we can do this easily, sometimes we feel overwhelmed by our thoughts, fantasies, etc. We need to trust that we can indeed know the Truth. When we are still, truly listening, we can see the delusions of our mind.

The big problem is what happens when our ego and opinions get in the way and we don't truly listen. In simple terms there will be karmic consequences. If we don't listen at all then the consequences are likely to hit us in the back of the head. However if we listen, albeit badly, we can begin to see the patterns of karma and begin to clean up our act. If we trust our listening faculty we can begin to recognise when we are not truly listening and we begin to sense that something is not quite right. Great Master Dōgen's "always be disturbed by the truth" is paramount here. We have to trust this sense of rightness and listen to it carefully. If we do this, our listening faculty will develop its sensitivity. In the end it comes down to BEING STILL.

The first time we held a retreat at the Benedictine Prinknash Abbey the then abbot, Father Aldhelm, a wonderful, truly humble man, asked to meet us and welcome us. He and Rev. Master Daishin had a

fascinating dialogue in which they compared notes as abbots. One important point that Father Aldhelm raised was about the vows that Benedictine monks take, of poverty, chastity, stability and particularly of obedience. He told us that the word “obedience” comes from the Latin “ob-audire,” which was related to listening/hearing. The vow of obedience is not only about following rules, but about listening to and hearing the Truth. This made a deep impression on me.

One of the major areas of trusting my training that I continually struggle with is taking refuge in the Sangha, particularly taking refuge in my fellow lay ministers. I was chatting recently to one of our colleagues about how, over the years when I have attended Lay Ministry Retreats and smaller gatherings of lay ministers, I usually end up at some stage getting irritated or downright mad inside. I thought this year’s Lay Ministry Retreat might be different. Fat chance! I think it was on the second day of the retreat that Rev. Saidō collared a few of us in the cloister and suggested that we seriously reconsider the name of the newsletter. Not an unreasonable request in itself, but it touched a raw nerve and I was hopping mad for the next 24 hours - a “twos-tantrum” wasn’t in it. I knew I was over-reacting but didn’t really know why. I sat with it, contemplated with it, ate with it, slept with it without getting close to the source of this real hot anger. Then I found one of Rev. Master Daishin’s taped lectures which dealt with the topic of anger. In his talk he pointed to how anger usually indicates some underlying grief or pain. This sounded right - I was in pain, but why? Slowly I began to see that the problem wasn’t to do with Rev. Saidō’s request, but was a hangover from last year’s Lay Ministry Retreat when we had many in-depth discussions about the newsletter. I had at times found these discussions disturbing and painful and I really didn’t want to go through that again. But then I realised that I had moved on. I was struggling with a memory, not a current reality. Once I was able to let go of that I was able to see more clearly how to deal with Rev. Saidō’s request. In the *Shushōgi* Dōgen says, ‘They [the Buddhas and Ancestors] in the past were as we are now and we

will be as they in the future.' I think I need a personal version of this to remind me that I can move on. This disturbing set of events then led me to examine the anger and irritation I tend to get into at meetings with you folks. It's both a simple and complex matter. It tends to happen when I disagree strongly with what someone has said. The conversation in my head is then usually a McEnroe-type "you cannot be serious" or something similarly scathing. I then recognise this as being very judgmental and coming from my ego and then get frustrated because I don't want to expose my obvious egotism and end up angry inside, not with the group, but with myself. What I need to do is trust myself, trust you folks and say what is on my mind. If it is egotistical, then there's a chance to learn from it and deal with it. Recently there was a series on BBC2 showing the training of Anglican and Methodist ministers. I think it was called "The Calling." I didn't see all the series, but one that caught my attention dealt with a similar problem. One of the students was angry that group discussions lacked depth because he and his fellow-students were afraid of being radical, disagreeing with each other or saying things that might upset each other, since this seemed to be in some way un-Christian. We can and should at times disagree with each other if it's right to do so--disagreement does not necessarily lead to disharmony. If it is uncomfortable or even painful, so be it. Again it comes back to trusting ourselves and trusting our training. I find that taking refuge in the Sangha is one of the most difficult, challenging, but also most fruitful aspects of my training, since it often/usually exposes the parts I don't want to expose.

We don't have to have been in training for years before we start to trust our training and show/expose it to the world. Though we are not teachers in the sense that the senior monks are teachers, we manifest the Buddha-dharma through our actions. Whether we like it or not, anyone who publicly declares themselves to be a Buddhist takes on a teaching role of some kind. It comes down to giving at the level of our experience. Over the last two years Joyce and I have become involved in a Wales Interfaith Network and also have been contributors

to a couple of multi-faith conferences for students at the World College of the Atlantic, where recently we had to speak on "What it means to be a Buddhist." These sort of events really put you on the spot and make you examine where you are in training. In responding to these calls we may have proper and natural concerns that what we say about Buddhism may be more about ego than the Truth. Here again we need to trust that we can know the Truth. When you trust your true nature, your true nature responds. It is when you don't trust that the response tends to come from the self-protecting ego.

It is important that we show the fruits of our training if only in gratitude to our teachers for showing us the fruits of their training. We owe it to our teachers to trust that we too can develop our true potential.

\* \* \*

## Journals to Merge this Winter

We are pleased to announce that beginning with the Winter 1997 issue the *Journal of Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey* (formerly the *Journal of Throssel Hole Buddhist Priory*) will merge with the *Journal of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives*. This new Journal will reflect and better serve the broader community of those who follow the teachings of Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett and of the Order she founded. This Journal will continue to be published quarterly and contain a greater volume of material than the present THBA Journal, with an average of 84 pages, frequently even more. Subscription rates for the new Journal will be comparable to those presently in effect for the JOBC, which is £2 higher in each of the present Throssel categories i.e. U.K./ EEU Surface Mail/ EEU AirMail. We feel confident that the increased material and broader scope will more than compensate for the price increase. Proceeds from subscriptions will pay for production and mailing costs, with any extra funds going to support the Order's activities; for those who wish to extend more support to the Order, a Sustaining Member category will be available. Subscriptions from U.K. and EEU readers will remain payable in pounds Sterling to Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey. Subscribers in all other locations will send them to Shasta Abbey, and for the present, the magazine itself will be published in the U.S. and shipped by air to Throssel, from whence it will be mailed to U.K. and European subscribers.

The European Editor at Throssel will work closely with the Chief Editor at Shasta Abbey in northern California in the U.S.A. in gathering and editing articles. It is of great importance to us that the scope of our Order's Journal encompasses all members, not only those in North America, and that the content should address the interests and needs of our richly diverse membership. As the Head of the Order, Rev. Daizui MacPhillamy, put it recently "One Journal for one Order." At the same time, the various Abbeys and Priories will have

the option of producing and including their own supplements, with announcements and news of special relevance to their local readership, to send out with the OBC Journal.

We would like to reassure our current subscribers that your full year's or two-year's subscription will be honoured at the present rate. For those of you whose subscriptions are now expiring, the old rates will apply until August 31, 1997. The new subscription rates will go into effect on September 1, 1997 For anyone presently subscribing to both Journals, a suitable extension to your subscription will be made. If for any reason you do not wish to continue your subscription under the planned merger, we will certainly refund the remainder of it. As always, the financial side (other than paying our bills!) is not our main concern, and anyone for whom the increased price poses a difficulty should not hesitate to contact us for other arrangements.

Although our new Journal will have the same name, *The Journal of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives*, we are excited at the prospect of this unprecedented venture and we welcome your comments, suggestions and articles for consideration. Above all we thank you for your past and ongoing support, and we look forward to hearing from you.

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## News

***Receiving the Buddha's Precepts:*** Twenty-three lay trainees joined the family of the Buddha by taking the Precepts to heart and receiving Lay Ordination during the annual Ten Precepts Meeting retreat, held March 29 - April 5. We offer our warm congratulations and best wishes to: Liz Pribac, Sohail Ajaz, Rosemary Baekke-Groome, Michael Baghurst, Mike Ball, Richard Barker, Steve Barnett, Alan Begg, Jason Chan, Julia Clark, Steve Clasby, Camilla Harvey, Elaine Hill, Marian Jani, Stephen Johnson, Darren Jones, Duncan McIntosh, Judy Moore, Oliver Page, Edie Shields, Arjen Verhagen, Brian Weld, and Wicher van der Haar.

***Receiving the Brown Kesa:*** Three Lay Ministers received the Brown Kesa, the robe which represents the Precepts and the Buddha's way of training. On May 4th, directly after the festival ceremony of the Buddha's Birth, Rev. Master Daishin gave the brown Kesa to Chris Barker, a Lay Minister of the Reading Priory. Two more brown Ketas were given, by both the Head of the Order, Rev. Master Daizui, and Rev. Master Daishin, after the Manjusri festival ceremony on June 1st to Brian Gay of Bristol and Maureen (Mo) Henderson of St. Helen, France. In his presentation talk, Rev. Master Daizui emphasized that there are many different ketas given throughout a Buddhist trainee's life, and that all are the same Kesa whose meaning is the same: that which encourages us to continue on, taking the next step in training. Our sincere congratulations to all three of them.

***Monastic News:*** The community's spring monastic retreat came as a quiet interlude after the many activities of late winter and early spring. During this retreat, in the Head Novice's Dharma Ceremony, Rev. Clemence Davies successfully demonstrated his understanding of 'the wisdom of letting go and giving'; he received the congratulations of the Senior monks as well as expressions of gratitude for the example of his

training during the hundred-days training term. The Abbot's Dharma Ceremony on the following day concluded the retreat with helpful personal teaching for each priest and priest-trainee.

Recently the Community was pleased to welcome two new postulants, Brian Thompson, one of our Lay Ministers from Reading, who entered on April 25th and Mary Burgess of Sheffield, who entered on June 23rd. We wish Brian and Mary the very best in their future training.

**Family Weekend:** Our annual Family Weekend took place May 2nd-4th, with over 50 adults and enthusiastic young people and children attending. Weekend events included Dharma talks for all age groups, decorating the Baby Buddha's pavilion by the teenagers for Sunday's festival ceremony, and the younger children colouring and embellishing pictures of the Buddha's Birth. Informal activities absorbed everyone on Saturday afternoon: animated conversing among the adults, fast-paced Dharma Treasure hunts, nature hikes on the Abbey grounds, (attempted) dragon-kite flying--for once the famous Throssel winds were utterly uncooperative, and the young folks' traditional outdoor dinner by the pond with this year's five-monk "Family Weekend Team;" a hearty meal of crisps, vegetarian sausages and beans finished with some very popular canine entertainment from Rev. Master Daishin's dog, Ned.

During the Buddha's Birth ceremony the next day the children and young adults offered their lotus buds at the altar before pouring the sweet tea, representing the Water of the Spirit, over the statue of the Baby Buddha. During the following Dharma talk for the adults, given by Rev. Master Daizui, the children had their own Dharma talks. Lunch for all came next, with the Abbey's kitchen bountifully providing for a record number of 120 people. At the end of the weekend, tired but very contented young people (not to mention parents and adults!) went down the Abbey's drive anticipating next year's Family Weekend. Our thanks to all who came, some from very long distances, and who contributed so much to this congenial Sangha gathering.

**Lay Ministers' Retreat:** Twenty-four Lay Ministers met for their annual retreat at Throssel from May 29th to June 6th. A relatively unstructured schedule allowed everyone to tailor the time to their own needs and activities. Rev. Master Daishin held Dharma Interviews with them during the week, as well as optional posture classes to assist Lay Ministers in improving their own meditation and to enable them to help others. They went to specialised discussions, such as how 'confidentiality' might apply to Lay Ministers; they spent time getting to know each other, and were also able to avail themselves of time to simply be still. Highlighting the week were talks and informal gatherings with Rev. Master Daizui, Head of the Order, whom they delighted with the gift of two books of difficult-to-find scriptures. All agreed at week's end that it had been a strenuous and highly satisfying retreat.

**Sculpture Gift:** Newcastle Polytechnic student Alan Lyle recently made and gave to the Abbey a striking deer sculpture as part of an assignment to match an environment with an artwork suitable to that setting. Being interested in Buddhism, he was introduced to Throssel by Nick Whitmore, a staff member of the Polytechnic who over the years has generously advised us and given practical help with various art projects, including the making of the large Buddha statue on the Ceremony Hall's main altar.

The Buddha's first sermon, "Turning the Wheel of the Dharma in the Deer Park," inspired Alan's small reddish-sandstone sculpture which shows three young deer--one lying down, one getting up and one standing--together forming a complete circle within the block of stone. Alan, who has a special interest in animals, has completed an apprenticeship in stonemasonry and has worked on the restoration of Canterbury Cathedral. In future weeks he will return to 'site' the statue under a tree along the path to the Sange Shrine. We hope to share a photo of the sculpture with our readers when it is in place, and we wish to thank Alan for his meaningful, kind gift.

**The Spreading Dharma:** Priests from the Abbey travelled several thousand miles this spring in response to invitations to share the Buddha's teaching with lay Buddhists, newcomers and young students in many regions of Britain and the Netherlands. Group Evenings, retreats and other events were held in Manchester, Liverpool, Norwich, Huddersfield, Harrogate, Humberside, Preston, Gloucestershire, Aberdeen and Edinburgh. Visits to schools in the North have kept Rev. Phoebe and her guide-dog Joey very busy this spring. Buddhism is included in the government's curriculum to broaden knowledge of other religions, and the success of their visits seems indicated by the increasing number of requests we receive. Once the presentation is over, Rev. Phoebe and Joey (the "Golden Retriever Good-will Ambassador") routinely get pleas for impromptu call-ins at adjoining classrooms as the enthusiasm spills over. School coaches also pull up to the Abbey's door, and we are most pleased to show our buildings and practice to these young guests, helping them gain an early appreciation of the Buddha's Way.

**Dutch News:** Rev. Hakuun visited the Netherlands from May 29th to June 20th to lead retreats and to attend to the establishing of a legal structure for the O.B.C. in her native country. On June 2nd documents were finalised for "De Gemeenschap van Boeddhistische Contemplatieven" or "The Community of Buddhist Contemplatives," making it an official church authorised to raise funds for establishing and maintaining a Dutch Priory. Many thanks to solicitors Onno van der Schatte-Olivier and W. Boelens for their generous help. On June 7th Rev. Hakuun did a houseblessing for the home of Ingeborg and Pascal Meulendijk, also the meeting place of the Maastricht meditation group. Rev. Master Daishin joined Rev. Hakuun on June 13th in conducting a four-day retreat at De Tiltenberg Retreat Centre. We thank Rev. Master Daishin for his teaching (and support of the Dutch Sangha) and all who helped make this event so successful.

**Tree and Garden News:** After the blustery winds of March and

several severe frosts which set the garden back somewhat, our trees are in full leaf and the flowers blooming splendidly. During the early spring months Rev. Galen and others defied rain and snow to plant more than 1700 trees, including Scots pine, oak, birch, aspen and hawthorn. These trees were donated by the Northumberland County Council, to whom we express our sincere thanks. We are now almost half-finished on the Myrtle Bank fields, with another 3500 trees (also donated by the Council) to be planted for completion of our Forestry Commission-approved plan. Nearly half the Abbey's property will be woodland, giving homes to many birds and forest animals. In other garden news, a large number of bluebells were planted beneath trees to provide a lovely ground cover in coming years, and the water supply system has been extended nearly all the way to the bottom vegetable garden. The arrival of the first cuckoo came two weeks later than usual, according to the monk who tracks this annual event; the cause of the tardiness has yet to be explained.

***Building News:*** During late March and early April, with some extra work days, we were able to move into the upper floor of the Hall of Pure Offerings; now only the back cloister, attic and storage rooms await completion. The Bursary and Publications sections moved into their new offices, and our two copiers (including the specialised one which prints the Journal and other publications) now have a warm, dry room to keep them happy and working well. Several accommodation rooms are in use by the Guest Department and Infirmary and our wonderfully spacious Lecture Hall proved to be a great asset this spring for gatherings of all members of the Sangha-congregation members on Wesak and other festival weekends, Lay Ministers here for their week-long retreat, and for monks and laity attending Dharma talks and meetings with Rev. Master Daizui during his visit. Plans are progressing for the conversion of Myrtle Bank's barn to more living quarters for the Abbey's growing community. Once again, to our many kind donors, our grateful thanks for the offerings which literally provide shelter and enable the work of the

Buddha to continue.

***Cardiff Group Anniversary:*** The Cardiff meditation group will be celebrating its tenth anniversary this autumn with a special event for group members and friends. For further details please contact George and Joyce Norwell [tel. (01222) 890034].

***In Gratitude:*** We are thankful for the many thoughtful donations that have been brought or sent to us over the past months, including gifts of bread, biscuits, fruit and vegetables, cake, incense, hand tools, fabric, a scissors and sharpener, several sewing books and a garden fork (in response to our requests in the Spring Newsletter), a heater, picture frames, treats for our dogs and cats, garden seeds, stamps, clothing, a safety helmet for building work, stationery, disposable gloves, several tables and a beautiful, hand-pieced quilt. For these and the many other offerings which sustain our daily practice we are truly grateful.

***Begging Bowl:*** The Abbey could use a mains-powered electronic calculator, which could have a printer tape, and several of the monastic offices would greatly appreciate the donation of a small rolling-disc paper guillotine. The Kitchen would be grateful for sturdy cloths for wiping tables and counters; new face cloths in dark colours would be ideal. They also have a need for large tea cozies. On a practical note, our storage space for donations of large household items such as furniture or carpeting is extremely limited, should we be unable to use them immediately. A phone call to the Bursar beforehand would be most helpful in determining the logistics of delivery, etc. Thank you for your understanding.

## **Reading Buddhist Priory**

***Meditation Hall Opening:*** On March 2nd Rev. Master Daishin came

south to officially open the Priory's new Meditation Hall. In his dedication Rev. Master said:

The foundation of this temple is the "absolute upright" that holds many phenomena within its delicate balance, the True Centre that is the Refuge with the coming and going birth of and death. Here is the Pure Land sought by the Bodhisattvas; it cannot be found in emptiness, for all living beings are the Buddha Land. We dedicate this new hall and new extension of the Priory to the enlightenment of All.

Forty-nine members and friends managed to (just!) fit inside the Hall to participate in the ceremony and hear Rev. Master's Dharma talk afterwards. We are most grateful to Rev. Master Daishin for his support and for coming down to Reading, and to all whose contributions, material and spiritual, make possible our place of training.

**Funeral:** On April 8th, after a long illness Chichester meditation group member Deborah Khudabux died peacefully in the meditation room of her home in Brighton. Rev. Olwen, assisted by several Lay Ministers, performed the private funeral ceremony shortly thereafter and helped sit vigil throughout the night with Deborah's body. On April 16 Rev. Olwen conducted Deborah's public funeral at the crematorium in Brighton, which was attended by over a hundred of her friends and relations. We send our condolences to her husband, Cady Khudabux.

## TELFORD BUDDHIST PRIORY

**Visit:** From 6th to 11th May we were very pleased to have Rev. Master Daizui, the Head of our Order visit us. He joined our regular Wednesday group meeting and explained his reasons for coming to the U.K., and some of his thoughts about future developments within the Order. On the following Saturday, Rev. Master Daizui joined us for our monthly day-long retreat and gave a very engaging Dharma

talk on the continuing need for the Precepts in the modern world. An extended period of questions afterwards reflected the central place this topic continues to hold in our tradition. We would like to take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to him for devoting so much of his time and effort on our behalf.

***In Gratitude:*** The Priory would like to thank all those who have kindly made donations of so many varieties during the initial three months of starting up; they are simply too numerous to mention individually. The Priory has been able to function so effectively so quickly testifies to the great generosity of spirit shown by congregation members and friends from a very wide area.

***Alms Bowl:*** We would be grateful if anyone knows of a source of any of the following items which may be no longer needed and which could be put to good use at the Priory: Bodhisattva scrolls, a Workmate or similar workbench, miscellaneous wood- or metalworking tools and reclaimed wood. Please contact the Priory beforehand to check that we have not already had donated a particular item. Thank you.

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**Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey**  
**Affiliated Meditation Groups and Priories**

<b>ABERDEEN</b> (01330) 824 339 Mondays 7.30pm	<b>HUDDERSFIELD</b> (01484) 852749 or 681300 Thursdays 7.30pm	<b>NOTTINGHAM</b> (0115) 960 3450 Weds. 7.30pm
<b>BIRMINGHAM</b> (01384) 280084	<b>LANCASTER</b> (01524) 34031 or 63503 Monday evenings	<b>PRESTON</b> (01995) 640623
<b>BRISTOL</b> (01291) 650581	<b>LEICESTER</b> (0116) 288 6978 Alternate Fridays 7.30pm	<b>SHEFFIELD</b> (01142) 2509443
<b>CAMBRIDGE</b> (01223) 411018 Tuesdays 7.30pm once a month	<b>LIVERPOOL</b> (0151) 724 3030 Weekly	<b>EUROPE</b>  <b>Germany - Munchen</b> (0049) 89 171 783 <b>Netherlands (0031)</b> Groningen 50 314 3489 Maastricht 43 325 8504 or 43 361 4619 Utrecht 30 251 0849
<b>CARDIFF</b> (01222) 890034 Thursdays 7.30pm	<b>LONDON</b> (0171) 431 6734 Tuesdays, 7.30pm	
<b>CHICHESTER</b> (01243) 551315 Thursdays 8pm	<b>MANCHESTER</b> (0161) 797 0251 Monday evenings	<b>READING BUDDHIST PRIORY</b> 176 Cressingham Road Reading RG2 7LW (0118) 986 0750
<b>EDINBURGH</b> (0131) 662 1865 or 228 2506 Mon & Fri 7.30pm Weds 7am	<b>MILTON KEYNES</b> (01280) 813962 Mondays, 8pm	<b>TELFORD BUDDHIST PRIORY</b> 49 The Rock Ketley, Telford TF3 5BH (01952) 615 574
<b>EXETER</b> (01363) 777922 Weds evenings	<b>NEWCASTLE</b> (0191) 236 2084 Thursday evenings	
<b>HARROGATE</b> (01423) 541322 Tuesday evenings	<b>NORWICH</b> (01603) 502 876 Weds. 7.30pm Sundays, 9am	

**Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey**  
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